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AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

ARMY ORDERS ALL-COTTON MATTRESSES: The Quartermasters Corps of the Army has agreed to all-cotton specifications for a lot of 275,000 new mattresses which the Army plans to buy as a part of a general assignment of 650,000 mattresses, the purchase of which was decided upon some time ago. Cost to the Army on all-cotton mattresses is only 10 cents more per mattress than the last lot of mattresses ordered which called for 50 percent cotton and 50 percent linters. Orders previous to the defense program called for 40 percent cotton and 60 percent linters. The Army elected to pay the additional cost in view of increased outlets for linters.

ENTOMOLOGY EXPERTS HELP ARMY CHECK TERMITES: The Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, at the request of the officer in charge of the Quartermaster Depot, Jeffersonville, Ind., is sending an entomologist to inspect and supervise termite control on the post warehouses which are infested with the pests.

DECENTRALIZING DEFENSE CONTRACTS PLANNED: The Defense Commission has approved a plan proposed by Commissioner Sidney Hillman which by "farming out" defense contracts by piece work will make it possible to provide employment in small factories, that in the recent past have been working only part time or not at all. The plan, which is working successfully in England and Germany, is to spread the defense contracts by piece work over a number of these small plants which do not have the facilities for turning out a complete defense item such as an airplane or a machine gun. The plant then sends its item to a central assembling plant, together with pieces manufactured in other small plants, for final assembling. Good points in the plan as seen by the Commission are: Further decentralization of defense production; taking the jobs to labor instead of labor moving to already over-crowded big-city industrial centers; avoid necessity of building housing projects; spread, instead of concentrating, farmers' markets. A preliminary study has been made of about 15 such plants in small cities with a labor surplus. Those capable of doing defense contracts on a "small bit" scale will be listed and sent to all government agencies letting out defense contracts and to all contractors now engaged in defense work with the suggestion that they use these added facilities where possible to supplement present output.

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: UNITED KINGDOM: The Government is considering a plan to assure more equitable distribution of feed-stuffs. The plan contemplates introduction of a coupon rationing system for livestock. Milk output is now below pre-war volume because of drought and limited feed supplies. Milk consumption has increased. A milk shortage is anticipated this winter. The Government is taking steps to insure equitable distribution and has asked individuals to whom milk is not essential to restrict use where possible.

CANADA: Arrangements were concluded with United Kingdom for sale to British Ministry of Foods of bacon, cheese, condensed milk, honey, canned tomatoes, canned and dried apples, canned salmon, and other canned and frozen fish. The Dominion is expected to provide an increasingly important share of these foodstuffs for Britain. Discussions are under way between Britain and Canada on British wheat requirements.

DENMARK: Sales of butter from November 8 to 27 were restricted to one kilo per person, and to 70 percent of normal consumption for restaurants and other business concerns. Butter rations for December probably will be 350 grams per person per week. Drastic reductions are foreseen thereafter. Confidential reports indicate that German forces in Norway are being supplied with Danish butter. Danish food-stuff situation is steadily becoming more difficult because of forced export requirements, declining production, excessive prices, and increasing unemployment. It is anticipated that milk, pork, fats and soap will be rationed in the near future.

ARGENTINA: The Grain Board was authorized to sell ear corn for fuel at 20 pesos per metric ton (\$5.40 per short ton) to railway companies at points of origin, and at 23 pesos (\$6.21 per short ton) to factories on cars at destination.

